

WASHINGTON TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE

BRIEFING PAPER

Prepared for the
March 2005 TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEETING

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PURPOSE:

The purpose of this discussion will be to continue Phase 2 workshop discussions with the Commission on the Washington Transportation Plan (WTP) update now in its second phase. This month the themes are Safety-Part 2 and Transportation Access. The workshops will establish a connection between the guiding principles of law and Commission policy, the Phase 1 data analysis, and the emerging directions that are shaping the future of the state's transportation plan update.

In Phase 2 the Commission will consider both base or existing investment areas and proposed areas of targeted investment. The Commission will be presented with proposals for new and changes to existing policies.

The background materials include revised timeline for the WTP Update (see attachments A1 and A2). Staff will also review the existing federal and state statutes and Commission policy that guide planning and prioritizing transportation investments (see attachment B) for the issues addressed in each workshop. These guiding principles have been in place since the late 1980s and 1990s and set the stage for the rest of the update discussion.

The March workshop will continue the focus on proposals for Safety. In February, the Commission discussed the first part of this issue. In addition, Transportation Access will be discussed. These will be in the context of current programs of investment if they exist. Attachment C shows the "To Do" policies and strategies and the proposed areas of targeted investment for the issues we'll discuss. As mentioned in the February workshop, later workshops will describe proposals for the remaining WTP issues.

ACTION/OUTCOME:

Staff will seek Commission concurrence on the existing set of guiding principles and make note of those areas where we have identified a gap in Commission policy or a strategy to implement policy.

WTP information has been used in an early action revenue recommendation to the Legislature in 2005. Some of today's discussion will be familiar to Commissioners from those discussions. These topics remain part of the WTP update in the event that the 2005 Legislature does not act on the Commission's 2005 recommendation.

The Commission will review a preliminary list of areas to target for investment and staff will seek feedback on these. The proposed areas of targeted investment will be further developed in Phase 2 and become part of the Commission's prioritized investment proposal to the Legislature in 2007.

BACKGROUND:

The WTP is required by state and federal law to be regularly updated. The WTP is a blueprint for transportation programs and investment, adopted by the Transportation Commission and forming the policy and long-range plan for the state's transportation system. The Commission is scheduled to adopt the update currently underway later in 2005. It will cover the period 2007-2026 and will be the basis for a 10-year investment proposal (2007-2016) to the Legislature for 2007.

The WTP update has been framed along 9 strategic issues (March topics in **boldface**):

• System Preservation	• Building Future Visions
• Safety	• Moving Freight
• Transportation Access	• Strong Economy and Jobs
• System Efficiencies	• Health and the Environment
• Bottlenecks and Chokepoints	

Phase 1 of the update has developed and analyzed data about the transportation system and its use, including current and expected future conditions, demand for the movement of people and goods, and the effects of the system on the economy and the environment. (See issue folios for summaries of Phase 1 analysis and investigation.)

DISCUSSION:

Directions for possible statewide policies, strategies, and investment programs have emerged from Phase 1 analysis. There are four distinct decision points for the Commission in Phase 2:

- **Policy statements:** Continue existing policy, or propose new or changed Commission policy, or recommend a change to state or federal law.
- **Strategies:** How to implement Commission policy, which will lead to investments.
- **Investments:** Either operating or capital programs, by category, that lead to projects or service.
- **Assumed financial capacity** for the 20-year period covered by the plan.

Staff has encapsulated these proposed policies, strategies, and investments as shown in Attachment C for the WTP issues under discussion.

At the March workshop we will discuss Commission direction for the WTP's policy and strategy proposals that have emerged, and we will discuss investment proposals for two WTP issues—Safety-Part 2 and Transportation Access. In February, the Commission discussed Preservation and the first part of Safety. Subsequent workshops will delve into the policy, strategy, and investment proposals for the remaining six WTP issues (March through May 2005). Shortly after, the Commission will prioritize proposals that would become a 10-year investment proposal to the Legislature in 2007.

A 10-year investment proposal will be part of the 20-year WTP update. A draft WTP will be presented to the Commission in Fall 2005, then the draft WTP will be available for public comment period (roughly September-November 2005), and the Commission would adopt a final plan in December 2005.

Also in your mailer is a preview of the presentation slides for March workshops. If you have questions about the information on the slides please send those to Jennifer Ziegler, so that staff can prepare answers in time for the March 16th workshop.

RECOMMENDATION:

Concur on the “To Do” policy and strategy proposals—some are presently underway now and some are longer-term efforts.

Concur on investment proposals to continue into later prioritization stages.

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